



State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

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June 6, 2006

The Honorable André Bauer
President of the Senate
State House, 1st Floor, East Wing
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Dear Mr. President and Members of the Senate:

I am hereby vetoing and returning without my approval S. 910, R-356.

S. 910 mandates that licensed nurses wear a one-inch by three-inch identification badge bearing the nurse's name and title. Although this bill is well intentioned, I am vetoing S. 910 because I believe government should resist the urge to place mandates on private business unless there are compelling reasons to do so.

Government mandates on the private sector have a cost, and I believe only in the event of a compelling societal need should we use the force of government to compel private action. Last year, I reluctantly allowed a bill to go into law - which mandated ID tags for certain medical personnel in hospitals. I did so because the bill's proponents made a compelling case for patients and their families to be able to immediately identify the various medical personnel who converge on the patient during health emergencies in public hospitals.

By contrast, this bill requires all nurses statewide to wear an ID tag, even though many nurses operate in settings where an emergency situation is unlikely. Other nurses still work almost exclusively in private practices, and many people in these settings have longstanding relationships with their caregivers. In these places, the utility of a nametag is negligible, and government mandates are not appropriate.

I believe a wiser course is to leave this to the private sector. It could be the standard of the South Carolina Medical Association or the South Carolina Nurses' Association to pass professional rules or guidelines for their members. However well intentioned, I do not feel it is Columbia's rightful place to usurp that role.

I recognize that provisions were added on during the process to help ease South Carolina's entry into the multi-state Nursing Compact. I agree with those parts of the bill, but unfortunately they are tied to the earlier described government mandate that compels my veto.

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In the interest of keeping South Carolina in good standing with the Nursing Compact, I would be glad to write a letter concerning South Carolina's intent to move forward with similar provisions – minus the ID tag language - when the General Assembly convenes in January.

For these reasons, I am returning S. 910 without my signature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'MS', is written above the printed name.

Mark Sanford

cc: The Honorable John M. Knotts, Jr.